

**LEGCO BILLS COMMITTEE
MEETING 15 JUNE 1999**

**PROPOSAL TO RAISE THE
FIXED PENALTY FOR SMOKY VEHICLES TO \$5,000**

**SUBMISSION FROM
HONG KONG CONSERVATION PHOTOGRAPHY FOUNDATION**

Why am I here? Why are you here?

Because together we must reverse the decline in Hong Kong's air quality. Changes have to come. Otherwise the costs to our community's health, to the economy, and to tourism will be too great for Hong Kong to sustain.

There is now real momentum for environmental improvement - and air pollution is the community's greatest concern. Any group that supports better air quality, for example by supporting this proposal to raise the fine for smoky vehicles, will be leading the way.

Sometimes we focus too much on the technical aspects of pollution - and we forget the people. To me, air pollution is above all about families: old parents, wives, husbands, and especially children - whose growing lungs need help not harm.

I have great sympathy for taxi drivers and the transport trade. Lines of taxis waiting for passengers, traffic jams, irregular incomes, long hours, night work, running and maintenance costs. It's tough business.

But we all breathe the same air. The health and well being of the community must be paramount. Remember: the community includes the families of transport operators and taxi drivers rely greatly on tourism. Tourists don't like dirty cities.

About 52 per cent of particulates come from our vehicles. This proposal is just one of many possible ways of cutting emissions: every one deserves our support.

How bad is Hong Kong's air. Because we spend so much time in built up areas, and do not see long distances, often we simply don't realise how bad Hong Kong's air has become. Let me show you some photos. Taken from peaks, they show the true situation.

BREAK TO VIEW PHOTOS

A year ago my mother died from lung disease - caused by cigarette smoking. But however caused, lung disease - with chronic bronchitis and asthma - has the same end result. Seeing a loved family figure struggling to breathe, relying for life on an oxygen cylinder, is a sad sight. Sometimes, as the person gasps for breath, it is shocking.

Medical statistics clearly connect air pollution and lung disease. So I strongly support any step that will help give us good air quality. The Hong Kong Conservation Photography Foundation supports this proposal to raise the penalty for those who let their vehicles degrade Hong Kong's air quality. Remember, properly maintained vehicles, using the correct fuels, will pay no penalty.

Creating a new environmental future should not involve finger pointing. It should be based on partnerships. So equally strongly this Foundation would support government schemes to reward - and also to publicly recognise - transport operators that take vigorous pro-active steps to reduce emissions. The time for environmental bickering is over. The time for shared action has arrived.